



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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7 December 2005

### SCG100764.E

Serbia and Montenegro: Treatment of persons in mixed Catholic and Muslim marriages in Kosovo; availability of state protection (January 2000 - November 2005)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Specific information on the treatment of persons in mixed Catholic and Muslim marriages in Kosovo could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, the situation of ethnically mixed marriages in Kosovo and the ethnicity of the partners, although information provided in the context of Serb and ethnic Albanian relations (Associated Press 19 Mar. 2004; UN 24 Aug. 2004; BBC 5 Jan. 2000).

According to reports from The International 16 Aug. 2002) or via the *Guardian* 19 Mar. 2004). In a 19 March 2004 article that despite the presence of the United Nations (UN) Organization) forces in Kosovo, the treaty Albanians and fewer than one hundred thousand Serbs continued to "live in apartheid-style separation" (see also KHM 7 Nov. 2005).

In 29 November 2005 correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, an associate professor of sociology at Northeastern University in Boston, who is an expert on inter-ethnic relations in the Balkans, stated that the partners of ethnically mixed marriages would find it very difficult to live and work in Kosovo at the present time [2005]. The assistant professor added that legal and administrative bodies in Kosovo "are probably not ... strong enough" to guarantee the respect of such people's rights or ensure their protection (Associate Professor 29 Nov. 2005).

This Associate Professor's allegations were corroborated by the UN and various other sources which, since 2000, have repeatedly remarked on the physical danger that would be faced by persons in ethnically mixed situations who had fled the conflict in Kosovo, should they ever return (UN 24 Aug. 2005; *ibid.* 30 Mar. 2004; *ibid.* Jan. 2003; *ibid.* Sept. 2001; BBC 5 May 2000; *Yorkshire Post* 6 Jan. 2000). For instance, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has stated that Kosovo Albanians in mixed marriages are in need of international protection (UN 24 Aug. 2004) and that those outside of Kosovo faced physical danger, should they return (*ibid.* 30 Mar. 2004; *ibid.* Jan. 2003; *ibid.* Sept. 2001). In 2000, sources stressed the safety risks faced by

Kosovars of mixed ethnicity (*Yorkshire Post* 6 Jan. 2000) as well as by ethnic Albanians suspected of cooperating with Serbs (BBC 5 May 2000).

In 2005, Amnesty International (AI), Human Rights Watch (HRW), and the Kosovo Helsinki Monitor (KHM) reported that in various locations throughout Kosovo, authorities either failed to provide adequate protection to minority communities (AI 2005; HRW 13 Jan. 2005) or, "despite serious efforts and results achieved, [Kosovo domestic and international authorities] should and likely could have been more efficient, more vigorous and more rigorous, in the protection of the rights of minorities" (KHM 7 Nov. 2005). According to HRW, "the NATO-led Kosovo Force and U.N. international police failed catastrophically to protect minorities during the widespread rioting in Kosovo in March" 2004 (26 July 2004). HRW mentioned that the victims of the rioting, which left 21 people dead, over 950 wounded, and 4,100 displaced, were almost exclusively Serbs, Roma, Ashkali, or other non-Albanians (13 Jan. 2005).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

Amnesty International (AI). 2005. "Serbia and Montenegro." *Amnesty International Report 2005*. <<http://web.amnesty.org/report2005/yug-summary-eng>> [Accessed 29 Nov. 2005]

Associate Professor of sociology, Northeastern University, Boston. 29 November 2005. Correspondence.

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). 5 May 2000. "Return to Kosovo." <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/736486.stm>> [Accessed 30 Nov. 2005]

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Human Rights Watch (HRW). 13 January 2005. "Serbia and Montenegro." *World Report 2005*. <<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/01/13/serbia9859.htm>> [Accessed 30 Nov. 2005]

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Kosovo Helsinki Monitor (KHM). 7 November 2005. Gazmend Pula. "The Current Situation of Minorities in Kosovo." <[http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc\\_summary.php?sec\\_id=3&d\\_id=4158](http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc_summary.php?sec_id=3&d_id=4158)> [Accessed 29 Nov. 2005]

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United Nations (UN). 24 August 2004. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). "Kosovo Minorities Still Need International Protection, says UNHCR." <<http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/print?tbl=NEWS&id=412b5f904>> [Accessed 29 Nov. 2005]

\_\_\_\_\_. 30 March 2004. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). "UNHCR Position on International Protection Needs of Individuals from Kosovo in Light of Recent Inter-Ethnic Confrontations." <[http://www.ecoi.net/pub/sb109\\_hcr-kos-pos-300304.pdf](http://www.ecoi.net/pub/sb109_hcr-kos-pos-300304.pdf)> [Accessed 29 Nov. 2005]

\_\_\_\_\_. January 2003. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). "UNHCR Position on the Continued Protections Needs of Individuals from Kosovo." <[http://www.ecoi.net/pub/sb86\\_hcr-pos-prot-0103.pdf](http://www.ecoi.net/pub/sb86_hcr-pos-prot-0103.pdf)> [Accessed 29 Nov. 2005]

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*Yorkshire Post* [Leeds]. 6 January 2000. Michael Brown. "Most of Kosovo Refugees are Still in UK." (Factiva)

#### Additional Sources Consulted

Unsuccessful attempts to contact the following oral sources:

The Centre for Women's Human Rights - Elena in Prishtina;

An expert on Balkan inter-ethnic relations at the Research Center on Gender and Ethnicity in Budapest;

The Kosova Helsinki Monitor (KHM) in Prishtina;

The Kosovo Women's Network in Prishtina;

A senior researcher on national minorities at the University of Belgrade;

The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK); and,

The Woman's Centre - Tetova/Kosovar in Prishtina.

**Internet Sites, including:** *Courrier des Balkans* [Arcueil, France], European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI), Freedom House, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), Kosovo Helsinki Monitor (KHM), Lawyers Committee for Human Rights-YUCOM [Belgrade], The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), United States Department of State, World News Connection (WNC).

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